

British Red Cross, Section 109
(I.V.S.P.-) Civilian Relief
B.A.O.R.
April 26th, 1946

OPERATION SWALLOW

A protestant priest was interviewed on arrival at Landkreis Münster Transit Camp - Pastor Joachim Schulz - for his account of the expelling of 1500 people from Peilau-Gnadenfrei, Kreis. Reichenbach in Schlesien, under Operation Swallow.

Although he knew others had been expelled from the neighbouring Parishes no reason had been given as to why i.e. the cession of the whole area to form New Poland. No news-papers or listening to wireless had been allowed for a year.

On Thursday April 18th at 16.00 hrs. he and his fellows were warned that they had to leave their houses at 08.00 hrs. the next morning - Friday. At this hour they and any luggage they could carry were put into wagons and taken to the station. Here the train of covered cattle-trucks was loaded - about 30 in each wagon. On the following morning (Saturday) the train left and travelled to Königszelt about 30 km away. Here they stayed until that night in the train then leaving for Maltsch where they stayed until midday on Sunday. Sunday-night they reached Siegersdorf - than on to Kohlfurt the last station before the Russian Zone. From Kohlfurt they went through the Russian Zone to Alversdorf in the British Zone arriving Tuesday afternoon.

At Alversdorf they were deloused and given a very rough medical inspection. Tuesday evening the refugees left Alversdorf and arrived at the Main Transit Camp of Warendorf in Regierungsbezirk Münster on 0.40 hrs. on Wednesday-morning. Here they are registered, medically inspected and deloused and given a hot meal. Next day they were distributed amongst the Kreise - The Person himself arouse by motorwagen at the Landkreis Münster camp at Telgte. When we interviewed him about 100 of the 250 arriving at Telgte had been billeted in Westbevern.

Points from his account were : -

Russian soldiers had entered the train wagons at Königszelt and stolen clothes, boots and food. They had been told to bring 14-days rations but this was not possible as none had enough money nor was the food obtainable.

A British Officer was seen at Kohlfurt. The villages that they passed in the ceded territory were completely deserted - some of last year harvest not yet gathered with potatoes still in the ground.

As far as I could judge the story was true and I have excluded all stories the pastor had "heard" and current rumours.

Westbevern,
B.R.C. Section 109,
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